



# Office of School Improvement Newsletter

Dr. Kathleen M. Smith, Director  
Office of School Improvement  
Phone: (804) 786-5819

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## Message from the Editors

Mr. Michael L. Hill, PASS Coordinator  
Ms. Beverly Rabil, Priority Schools Coordinator  
Dr. Yvonne A. Holloman, Associate Director

We are very pleased to publish the second issue of the Office of School Improvement (OSI) Newsletter. We hope that you will find the information included in this issue helpful. This will be the final issue for the 2012-2013 school year. First and foremost, the OSI would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the divisions and schools that we have had the opportunity to work with this year. The cooperation, support and assistance from each of you during the implementation and monitoring of the new federally-approved flexibility waiver has been remarkable. Together, we have worked to increase educational opportunities for the children. In this issue, we continue to provide helpful information with a focus on support for the school principal and school leadership teams. Support for building instructional leadership capacity and process development at the school level is very important to our office. The "Principals Corner" section is updated in hopes of capturing the most current "best practices" available. In addition, we have included with this issue essential information and reference sites about the new principal and teacher evaluation process. Also, included is a document entitled, *Improving School Performance for All Children—Preparing for the Journey*. This document outlines key components of a successful school improvement journey. We continue to be excited about the outstanding work of the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) Intra-agency Technical Assistance Team. It is through ongoing collaborative efforts with this internal VDOE team that many division and school technical assistance requests have been successfully delivered. On April 9 and 10, 2013, the third Indistar® Summit was held at the Wyndham Virginia Crossings Hotel and Conference Center in the Richmond area. The annual summit is sponsored by The Center on Innovations in Learning (CIL) and was hosted by the OSI. Teams from 23 states using Indistar® participated in this year's summit. We were very pleased to have Dr. Patricia I. Wright, Superintendent of Public Instruction, provide opening comments. A highlight of the summit was panel discussions led by several Virginia division/school teams and VDOE contractors. Congratulations to our Virginia Team for the great work that was shared. Summer planning is underway in the OSI for training opportunities for many of our divisions and schools. Please look for more information to come. We know that great things can happen for our children when we all work and learn together. Please do not hesitate to contact the OSI for support!

## Important Dates

**June 4, 2013**—Webinar for division liaisons with OSI staff to discuss summer activities in preparation for the 2013-2014 school year.

**June 11 and 18, 2013**—VDOE contractors may participate in voluntary Indistar® refresher training

**June 20-21, 2013**—The School-University Research Network (SURN) annual conference at The College of William and Mary (The division contact person for focus schools will attend the conference). Note: Registration is closed.

**June 21, 2013**—Data Analysis Workshop for selected middle schools

**Continuing through June 28, 2013**—The principal and school leadership team including division representative will monitor the school improvement plan by recording update tasks on Indistar®, and will continue to do so on at least a monthly basis.

**June 24, 2013**—All priority schools submit 4th Quarterly Report on Indistar®

**June 24-27, 2013**—National Institute for School Leadership (NISL) training for certain priority schools

**June 28, 2013**—Priority Schools Cohorts I and II—Final School Improvement Plan submitted via the Indistar® Dashboard. Priority Schools Cohort III—Submit Strand J Indicators

**June 28, 2013**—School- and division-level teams will submit their improvement plans via the Indistar® Dashboard (**No Rubrics or quarterly data review information will be submitted**).

**July-August**—Priority Cohort III Schools complete and/or revise indicators from all strands of the Transformation Toolkit

**July-August**—Application process for School Improvement Grant (SIG) Monitoring

**July 9-11, 2013**—Visions to Practice Conference

**July 15-18, 2013**—SURN Principals' Leadership Training in Williamsburg, Virginia (for selected schools)

**July 16-19, 2013**—NISL training for certain priority schools

**August 6 and 7, 2013**—Webinar to discuss the 2013-2014 required activities for focus schools and their division leadership teams. Participants will be assigned date.

**August 7 or 12, 2013**—Webinar to discuss the 2013-2014 activities for priority schools. Participants will be assigned date.

**September 30, 2013**—Completion of final School Improvement Plan, Leading and Lagging Indicator Annual Forms and Interventions Annual Forms by Priority Cohort I schools that are exiting due to Title I status (high schools) or meeting AMO for two consecutive years.

**September 30, 2013**—Completion of Leading and Lagging Indicator Annual Forms and Interventions Annual Form by Priority Cohort I schools that are continuing, Cohort II and III schools.

**Principal Evaluation** information will be presented at the VASEP and VASSP summer conferences.

Additional information about the new **principal evaluation** is in Superintendent's Memo #099-13 located at the following Web site:  
[http://www.doe.virginia.gov/administrators/superintendents\\_memos/2013/099-13.shtml](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/administrators/superintendents_memos/2013/099-13.shtml).

**Summer and Fall, 2013**—Principal Evaluation and Teacher Evaluation Institutes are being offered. Please see Superintendent's Memo #130-13 for Principal Evaluation information and #132-13 for Teacher Evaluation Institute information.

# Office of School Improvement (OSI) Updates

## **School Improvement Planning Update**

The Indistar® Web-based planning tool is currently being used by over 500 schools in Virginia. In an effort to garner input for improving the tool, the Office of School Improvement (OSI) conducted several focus groups with users representing school-level teams, division-level teams, and Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) contractors. Information gleaned from the focus groups as well as survey data have been shared with the Center on Innovations in Learning (CIL) staff to facilitate additional improvements to the tool such as: 1) making the meeting agendas and minutes more user-friendly; 2) creating due date alerts; and 3) sequencing tasks for each indicator. Several Indistar® users have requested ongoing support with using the tool as a component of school- and division-level improvement planning. As a result, School Improvement Support Sessions (SISS) will be conducted via webinar beginning in the summer. These voluntary sessions will provide an opportunity for users to receive “refresher” Indistar® training as well as ask questions regarding improvement planning strategies. Tentative dates for SISS webinars are: July 22, 2013; July 25, 2013; September 19, 2013; October 17, 2013; November 21, 2013; January 16, 2014, and February 20, 2014. Each session will begin at 10:00 a.m. Participants may register for the sessions and submit questions in advance to Dr. Yvonne Holloman at: [Yvonne.Holloman@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:Yvonne.Holloman@doe.virginia.gov). Additional information regarding the Indistar® Web-based planning tool is available at <http://www.indistar.org/>.



## **Focus Schools—Summer Activities/Planning for the Upcoming School Year**

The 72 schools identified as *focus schools* per the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) Flexibility Waiver* have completed their first year of implementation. During this time, school- and division-level teams have identified strategies for assisting teachers with meeting the needs of students recommended for Tiers 2 and 3 interventions. Examples include identification of adaptive reading assessments and local educational agency-developed mathematics assessments to aid in implementation of a tiered system of support. Throughout the academic year, various data points have been analyzed and used to update improvement plans. As school- and division- level teams prepare for the second year of ESEA Flexibility Waiver implementation, please consider the following summer activities:

- **Updating the school and division improvement plans using the preliminary Standards of Learning (SOL) data and other data–** The August 6 and 7, 2013, webinar will address strategies for updating the improvement plans.
- **Participating in voluntary School Improvement Support Sessions (SISS) webinars–** Voluntary webinars will be conducted for users who need a refresher session regarding improvement planning and/or use of the Indistar® Web-based planning tool. Additional information regarding these sessions will be forwarded in June 2013.
- **Summer meeting with the division liaison–** Division liaisons will meet with division leadership teams to complete the *ESEA Progress Monitoring Report for Focus Schools* (individual division leadership teams will coordinate with division liaisons to select meeting date).

## **Differentiated Technical Assistance Team (DTAT)**

The DTAT has posted several new technical assistance resources on the VDOE School Improvement and Reform Web-site including:

- Recorded series on Instructional Preparation
- Webinar series: Tiered Interventions to Keep Students On Track to Graduation:

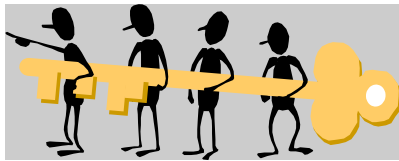
[http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/school\\_improvement/training/dta\\_student\\_support\\_sys/dropout\\_prevention/webinars\\_9-12/index.shtml](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/school_improvement/training/dta_student_support_sys/dropout_prevention/webinars_9-12/index.shtml)

- Student Assistance Programming:  
[http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/student\\_assistance\\_programming/index.shtml](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/student_assistance_programming/index.shtml)
- Contractor resources: materials from division liaison meetings, trainings for regional liaisons, DTAT request form:  
[http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/school\\_improvement/contractor\\_resources/index.shtml](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/school_improvement/contractor_resources/index.shtml)
- Webinars for focus schools, priority schools, warned schools, and Title 1 annual measurable objectives (AMOs) schools

Coming soon:

- Transformative Classroom Management
- Differentiated Instruction
- Student Classroom Engagement
- Instructional Delivery
- Leadership
- Elementary School Scheduling
- Improving School Improvement for All Children—Preparing for the Journey





## Virginia Department of Education Intra-agency Technical Assistance Team

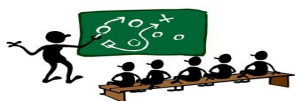
The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) Intra-agency Technical Assistance Team serves as an arm of the VDOE's Statewide System of Support. The Definition of Statewide System of Support (Center on Innovation and Improvement, May, 2011):

***“A statewide system of support is each State’s unique, organized, and coordinated means for encouraging and aiding the improvement of its districts and schools aimed at greater learning outcomes for all students. The system of support reflects the traditions, context, and desires of the State. The system of support is managed by the State Education Agency with partner organizations intentionally enlisted in the work. Because it is a system, the statewide system of support consists of many component parts organized and coordinated to serve particular purposes in relationship to one another. Because it is a social system, people are the statewide system of support’s primary component parts, and the system’s strength lies in the human and social capital residing among them.”***

The primary function of the team continues to be providing a statewide system of support to school divisions in meeting the educational needs of the Commonwealth’s children. The team has played a pivotal role in supporting the efforts of the OSI in responding to requests for technical assistance. The April team meeting focused on team members sharing upcoming summer and fall 2013 professional development opportunities being planned from each VDOE office/department. Additionally, discussion centered on the 2013-2014 statewide system of support goals, initiatives and partnerships with other organizations. The next meeting of the team is scheduled for June.

Please find below an updated listing of team members:

Mr. Michael Bolling, Director, Mathematics & Governor’s Schools  
Ms. Jo Ann Burkholder, Student Assistance Systems Coordinator, Office of Student Services (OSS)  
Dr. Cynthia Cave, Director, Office of Student Services (OSS)  
Mr. Jason Ellis, Test Results Utilization, Testing Administration, Scoring & Reporting  
Dr. Susan FitzPatrick, Grants and Program Manager, Office of School Improvement (OSI)  
Ms. Stacy Freeman, Title III ESL Specialist, Office of Program Administration & Accountability (PAA)  
Dr. Christine Harris, Director, Office of Humanities & Early Childhood  
Mr. Michael Hill, The Partnership for Achieving Successful Schools (PASS) Coordinator, Office of School Improvement, (OSI), Team Chairperson  
Ms. Samantha Hollins, Director, Special Education Program Improvement  
Dr. Yvonne Holloman, Associate Director, Office of School Improvement (OSI)  
Mr. Christopher Kelly, Education Coordinator, Office of Program Administration & Accountability (PAA)  
Dr. Teresa Lee, Specialist-Learning Disabilities and Attention Disorders, Special Education Instructional Services  
Dr. Thomas Manthey, Specialist – Coordinator, Virginia Tiered System of Support (VTSS), Office of Student Services (OSS)  
Mr. Eric Rhoades, Director, Science & Health Education  
Ms. Tracy Robertson, English Coordinator, Humanities & Early Childhood  
Mr. Thomas Santangelo, English/Reading Elementary, Humanities & Early Childhood  
Ms. Amy Siepka, Assessment Development Coordinator, Assessment Development  
Dr. Lynn Sodot, Improvement Specialist, Office of School Improvement (OSI)  
Dr. Kathleen Smith, Director, Office of School Improvement (OSI)  
Dr. Vivian Stith-Williams, Student Services Specialist, Special Education Program Improvement  
Ms. Carol Sylvester, Title II, Office of Program & Accountability (PAA)  
Dr. Linda Wallinger, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction  
Dr. Deborah Wickham, Mathematics—Elementary, Mathematics & Governor’s Schools



# Principals' Corner

**School improvement is a PROCESS not a checklist of activities. Align these principal-specific actions to help drive the school improvement PROCESS in your school.**

## Every Month During the School Year

>> **Conduct** monthly meeting with the school leadership and improvement team (review progress of school improvement plan (SIP) on Indistar®; review current Tier 2 and Tier 3 intervention data for all participating students (including Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners); review other significant school data; review school Indistar® Dashboard for reports due dates; status of all technical assistance and upcoming professional development; make needed revisions; post progress monitoring notes, agendas, and minutes).

>> **Observe** classroom instruction and conduct follow-up conferences with teachers (review lesson plans to ensure planning matches what is being taught; schedule peer observations and assign professional development as necessary).

>> **Review and monitor** weekly lesson plans for all teachers—plans must include evidence of application of VDOE Web site resources for writing, English, mathematics, and science; evidence of collaborative planning with the special education teacher, if appropriate.

>> **Review** all classroom teacher formative assessments to ensure curriculum map alignment, lesson plan alignment, and SOL test format including regular practice with technology-enhanced test items and writing SOL requirements.

>> **Conduct** instructional walkthroughs with the school leadership team to include division personnel noting instructional areas of strength and addressing areas needing improvement.

>> **Conduct** monthly staff meeting with a focus on instructional practices; review/update of Indistar® SIP; update on all technical assistance and professional development activities; update on school safety procedures/crisis plan.

>> **Conduct** monthly administrative meeting with grade-level/content area teams to discuss individual student progress (all students); review progress of students in tiered intervention; discuss referrals to Student Intervention Team where necessary; all support staff attend to include guidance.

>> **Conduct** principal-led parent outreach initiative to increase active involvement and communication.

>> **Develop and distribute** school monthly newsletter and calendar of activities for the upcoming month to all staff members, students, and parents.

>> **Submit** all required documents/reports due on Indistar® Dashboard.

>> **Maintain** updated school-wide calendar showing all school related activities for the month. Post where all staff can view.

>> **Conduct** safety drills and submit the required forms to the division.

>> **Conduct** monthly building walkthrough with lead custodian to inspect building maintenance and ensure safe school environment.

## April

>> **Review** report cards and provide written feedback to teachers. (Meet with individual teachers regarding students who may require a referral to the Student Intervention Team; conduct Student Intervention Team meetings based on teacher referrals.)

>> **Meet** with teachers regarding their revised retention lists.

>> **Using** specific individual student performance data, develop and implement the 45-day SOL Instructional Plan for all testing grades

>> **Plan** SOL Parent Night.

>> **Review** with staff expectations/guidelines for new/revised teacher evaluation process. Develop schedule for summative evaluation conferences and for review of documentation logs/portfolios. Review with staff division decision rules/guidelines for Standard 7 and expectations for documenting data to support Standard 7.

## May

>> **Coordinate** with division all summer school programs available to students.

>> **Conduct** SOL Parent Night.

>> **Conduct** quarterly school celebration (students, staff, and parents).

>> **Meet** with all staff members regarding the end-of-the-year responsibilities and procedures for closing out the school year.

>> **Begin** the planning process for the 2013-2014 school year. Request feedback from all staff (instructional and non-instructional) regarding suggestions for improvement for the next school year. Discuss any opportunities for grade-level planning opportunities over the summer.

## June

>> **Review** report cards and provide written feedback to teachers.

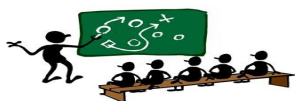
>> **Meet** with teachers regarding final retention lists; discuss procedures for parent notification of the impending retention and the appeals process.

>> **Continue** planning process for the 2013-2014 school year. Discuss feedback received from staff regarding recommendations for next year.

>> **Conduct** final school-wide end-of-the-year celebration with students, staff, and parents.

>> **Check-out** staff members on the last day of school after all tasks from the end-of-the-year checklist have been completed.





## Principals' Corner (cont'd)

### Summer Principal Action Priorities

- **Daily/Weekly Tasks**

**Keep** school enrollment and pupil-teacher-ratio (PTR) information updated.

**Keep** class rosters updated.

**Check** on progress of maintenance and summer cleaning.

**Keep** running list of items to review/share during teacher work week.

**Walk** the building each day.

**Meet** families and others as they visit.

**Check** with summer staff about tasks for the day.

**Return** phone calls and e-mails promptly.

**Model** a positive attitude.

- **Use the below principal actions to assist in the review, evaluation, and refinement of your school improvement process. Preparation, planning, and implementation are key!**

>> **Implement** effective organizational strategies – both school-wide and office procedures (i.e., tickler file, wall calendar, etc.).

>> **Review** important manuals including School Board Policy/Procedures, Personnel Policy/Procedures, Safety and Security Policy/Procedures, and Principal and Teacher Evaluation Procedures and Requirements.

>> **Do** your HOMEWORK – Study important information found on the VDOE Web site – including, Indistar® training modules and technical assistance professional development presentations on the School Improvement and Reform page and important information from Instruction including *Teacher Direct*. Become familiar with Todd Whitaker's two books "What Great Principals Do Differently" and "What Great Teacher Do Differently." Also, Edie Holcomb's book "Asking the Right Questions, Tools for Collaboration and School Change, Third Edition and John Hattie's "Visible Learning."

>> **Schedule** meeting(s) with the instructional leadership team to review new assessment data documenting trends and patterns; subgroup data needs; discuss feedback from previous year (what worked and what did not); review/revise the Indistar® School Improvement Plan; review master schedule needs; discuss needs for professional development schedule; share ideas for August teacher work

week schedule including staff meeting agenda items; develop plan of action to integrate all decisions into school improvement process.

>> **Review** new research on effective instructional practices and seek opportunities to observe effective instruction. For instance, visit the *Doing What Works* Web site at <http://dww.ed.gov/> and *Indicators in ACTION* on <http://www.indistar.org/action/>.

>> **Research** and plan to implement best practices for providing effective feedback to teachers on instructional practices.

>> **Develop** process for monitoring all aspects of instructional program.

>> **Develop** comprehensive lesson plan template with implementation expectations.

>> **Identify** walkthrough form to be used and develop schedule for use.

>> **Following** division policy, revise/review teacher evaluation process. Develop goal setting, observation, documentation review schedules for the coming year. See Superintendent's Memo #100-12 for additional resources at [http://www.doe.virginia.gov/administrators/superintendents\\_memos/2013/100-13.shtml](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/administrators/superintendents_memos/2013/100-13.shtml).

>> **Identify** teacher observation instrument and develop observation schedule for implementation during school year and communicate process to all staff involved.

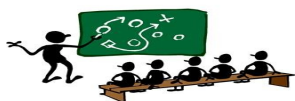
>> **Study** new principal evaluation process and tools. Begin developing ideas and gathering data from principal goal setting. In addition to district resources, see resources on VDOE Web site at

[http://www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching/performance\\_evaluation/principal\\_training/index.shtml](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching/performance_evaluation/principal_training/index.shtml).

>> **Review** exceptional education and English Language Learners' caseload assignments, Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), instructional delivery model needs, and child study/eligibility procedures.

>> **Determine** instructional student remediation needs/schedule with a focus on in-class corrective instruction using new/different research based instructional strategies. Analyze intervention data for Tier 2 and Tier 3 students to determine effectiveness. Consider triangulating SOL score, intervention provider, and type of intervention to assist in analyzing effectiveness of intervention.

>> **Develop** master schedule using current data and student needs; plan for new student target groups.



## Principals' Corner (cont'd)

>> **Identify**, design, and provide implementation guidelines and expectations for school data analysis system for use by all instructional staff. Must have ability to collect data on individual students and target groups.

>> **Develop** and prepare for implementation school safety and security procedures that are aligned with division expectations.

>> **Order** instructional and other materials (student agendas, teacher agendas, home/school communication folders, textbooks, if needed, etc.). Inventory all textbooks per division procedures to assess school needs.

>> **Finalize** class rosters; add new students as necessary.

>> **Finalize** room assignments and update school map.

>> **Update** staff information for staff handbook.

>> **\*Develop** teacher work week schedule maximizing time for work in classrooms and team planning (including inclusion teams). Include activities that encourage fun and teamwork. Create agenda for work week staff meeting and prepare materials and handouts. Organize all work week schedules, etc. and handbooks in notebook for teachers.

>> **\*Schedule** Open House before school starts – Open House can be an opportunity for students and parents to informally visit the school, classrooms and meet their teacher(s) and other staff, distribute any school forms, parent (committee/helper) sign-up, student supply list, sample student agenda, pay fees, tour the school, etc. Open House can also be a more formal event to introduce students and parents to middle school or high school, as an example. The key is planning and organization.

>> **Determine** how and when teacher assignments are communicated to students/parents.

>> **Prepare** “Welcome Back” letter to staff – include schedule for work week, school news, and generate excitement for the opening of school – mail letter to all staff by end of July.

>> **Meet** with Parent Teacher Association (PTA) president, program chair, and music teacher (if appropriate) to determine dates of PTA meetings and programs.

>> **\*Identify** and schedule fall and spring picture days.

>> **\*Schedule** PTA/School Back-to-School Night in September (first PTA meeting) PTA business meeting, teachers formally present to parents (in classrooms) instructional expectations for teachers, students and parents, student behavioral expectations, etc.

>> **Create** duty schedules – Bus and parent pickup, hall duty, lunch duty (if applicable), first day of school and first

week of school “All Hands on Deck” duty list, etc.

>> **\*Place** all reporting due dates from Indistar® Dashboard on school calendar.

>> **\*Develop** yearly schedule for SOL/Benchmark Assessment Analysis/Formative Assessment meetings with teachers beginning in August/September to discuss SOL results.

>> **\*Develop** schedules for interim report, report card, benchmark assessment and professional development.

>> **\*Schedule** meeting with bus drivers during teacher work week to discuss expectations.

>> **Create** and organize morning arrival and afternoon dismissal bus schedule (including first week of school) to maximize instructional time and student safety.

>> **\*Develop** content and schedule for first day of school principal meetings with students to set expectations for year.

>> **\*Schedule** faculty and team meetings (days of week and/or month) – faculty, leadership team, grade level/content team, vertical team, inclusion team, child study/eligibility team, IEP team, school improvement planning team, celebrate learning team, student assistance program team, etc. (combining teams wherever possible).

>> **\*Develop** mentor schedule for first year teachers and buddy schedule for other faculty and staff entering their first year at the school regardless of years of experience.

>> **\*Identify** “Celebrate Learning” Team; develop and schedule “Celebrate Learning” assemblies for the school year. Also, schedule school spirit days.

>> **Determine** and provide written duties and responsibilities for all school support staff—secretarial, custodial/maintenance, instructional, and administrative.

>> **Review** all schedules, rosters, updated lists, room assignments, etc. for suggestions and proofing.

>> **Update** student/parent handbook and faculty handbook.

>> **Update** school Web site and develop expectations and procedures for school Web site use by teachers.

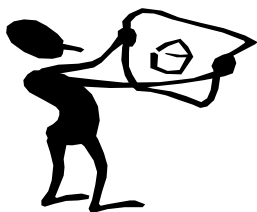
>> **Identify** strategies to increase parent communication.

>> **Develop** new parent liaison/resource program.

>> **\*Place** on school calendar all special schools days (i.e., Veteran’s Day, staff appreciation days, etc.).

>> **\*Review** upcoming school year division calendar, school board meetings, principal meetings, etc. before scheduling school activities and place on school calendar.

**\*Denotes** to be posted on school calendar



# Improving School Performance for All Children

## Preparing for the Journey

Michael L. Hill, PASS Coordinator, VDOE, OSI

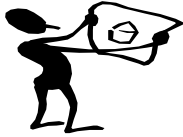
The following information is taken from a presentation that was recently developed by the Office of School Improvement.

The presentation was developed with several purposes in mind. First, to assist individual schools in preparing for the journey of school improvement and to identify important components of an effective improvement process. Second, to provide strategies to help maintain sustainability with identified improvement efforts.

Successful school improvement teams begin with the end-in-mind while visualizing the “big picture” and implementing and evaluating proven research-based processes and strategies for the purpose of creating an ongoing cycle of continuous school improvement. The “big picture” is unpacked by identifying, teaching, and cultivating a series of “main things”. Believing that keeping a compass on the “main things” is paramount to the success of the school improvement journey.

Here is an overview of the eight (8) identified main things successful school improvement teams practice:

- **Main Thing # 1—Students First**
  - The journey begins and ends with a laser-like focus on student growth.
  - All decisions are based on student need.
  - Create a safe and secure learning environment for all children.
- **Main Thing # 2—Process Driven**
  - Guide a process driven by a series of purposeful, end-in-mind actions that (when executed properly) will create intended results for all students.
- **Main Thing # 3—Teamwork**
  - Successful teams push for high-quality communication.
  - Develop and nurture a “culture of candor and support”.
  - Teach and practice the art of teamwork.
  - Celebrate learning.
  - Work “smart” and approach every day as an “event”.
- **Main Thing # 4—Fearless Leadership**
  - Demand schools and division teams practice fearless leadership with the “courage to disrupt”.
  - Demand school specific assistance and support from the division leadership team.
  - Require leadership at the division and school level that commits to building capacity through ongoing communication, collaboration, and empowerment .



## Improving School Performance for All Children (cont'd)

- **Main Thing # 5—Division Support**

- Require the division leadership team to exercise the “will” to do the right thing for the benefit of the children.
- Require division support to be aligned with the needs identified in each school’s improvement plan.
- Require a division leadership team member serve and actively participate on the school improvement team.
- Require division leadership team to perform monthly school visits—performing classroom walkthroughs and providing follow-up feedback to the school leadership team.

- **Main Thing # 6—Classroom Instruction that Works**

- Require and maximize the use of VDOE resources.
- Require the use of research-based instructional practices that positively effect student learning.
- Require the use of effective research-based formative assessment strategies.
- Require instruction that is tiered and student-specific.
- Require the use of multiple data points to inform instruction.

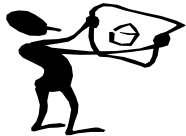
- **Main Thing # 7—Include the Involvement of Everyone, Everywhere, and Everyday**

- Take ownership of all children.
- Commit to teamwork and collaboration.
- Embrace an environment where respect for each other and high performance expectations for staff and students are the norm.
- Build personal relationships with all children.
- Empty their “pockets” of research-based differentiated instructional strategies for all children.

- **Main Thing # 8—The Improvement Plan**

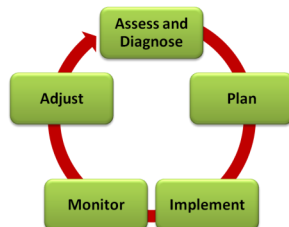
- Keep it simple.
- Involve school staff, division staff, parents, other community stakeholders, and outside experts in school improvement planning.
- Ask the right questions—Where are we now?; Where do we want to go?; How will we get there?; How will we know we are (getting) there?; and How can we keep it going?  
(from Edie Holcomb’s (2009), “Asking the Right Questions, Tools for Collaboration and School Change”, Third Edition, Corwin Press).
- Use data to assess school needs.





## Improving School Performance for All Children (cont'd)

- Provide clear, specific information about:
  - The identification process for all students at risk of failing or in need of academic interventions.
  - The tiered, differentiated intervention process to assign research-based interventions aligned with individual student needs (frequency and duration of students receiving Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions).
  - The monitoring process of students receiving targeted interventions.
- Schedule opportunities to monitor the progress of the improvement plan by:
  - Meeting monthly to record progress and analyze data.
  - Recording team meeting minutes and agenda with the plan.
  - Including detailed notes on status of tasks and objectives.
  - Sharing information about the plan with stakeholders.
- Anticipate modifications to the plan (in real time) by asking and documenting:
  - How will the team know if a student intervention is not successful?
  - How will the team know if a task is not successful? What data will be tracked?
  - How often will data be analyzed at the school and division level?
  - Who makes decisions about revisions to the plan?
- Make adjustments to the improvement plan based on:
  - Data— Evidence of Practice + Student Outcomes
  - Continuous Improvement— Data + Discussions + Decisions
- Apply a continuous improvement cycle:



The information outlined in this document will be available soon in PowerPoint presentation format on the VDOE—School Improvement and Reform Web site within the Differentiated Technical Assistance Training page at [http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/school\\_improvement/training/index.shtml](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/school_improvement/training/index.shtml).



# TEAMWORK

## Office of School Improvement

Dr. Kathleen Smith  
Director  
Kathleen.Smith@doe.virginia.gov

Ms. Patricia Lankford  
Secretary  
Pat.Lankford@doe.virginia.gov

Dr. Yvonne Holloman  
Associate Director  
Yvonne.Holloman@doe.virginia.gov

Mr. Michael Hill  
PASS Coordinator  
Michael.Hill@doe.virginia.gov

Dr. Susan FitzPatrick  
Grants and Program Manager  
Susan.FitzPatrick@doe.virginia.gov

Ms. Beverly Rabil  
Priority Schools Coordinator  
Beverly.Rabil@doe.virginia.gov

Ms. Janice Garland  
Lead School Improvement Coordinator  
Janice.Garland@doe.virginia.gov

Ms. Selena McBride  
Grants and Reports  
Selena.McBride@doe.virginia.gov

Ms. Annette Monroe-Martin  
Educational Consultant  
Annette.Monroe-Martin@doe.virginia.gov

Dr. Lynn Sodat  
Accreditation Specialist  
Lynn.Sodat@doe.virginia.gov

The Virginia Department of Education assists chronically low-performing schools and school divisions to implement effective instructional strategies to increase student growth. The Office of School Improvement has developed a nationally-recognized comprehensive support system that focuses on building division-level capacity to support schools in need of interventions.



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The ultimate goal in school improvement is for the people attached to the school to drive its continuous improvement for the sake of their own children and students.

- Dr. Sam Redding, 2009